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News in Review

8 June 2022



There's a real pent-up desire among the population to get out and enjoy itself

Over the last week, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations largely dominated the news. The extended bank holiday weekend provided an opportunity for people and communities throughout the UK to come together to celebrate the historic milestone. Official events over the long weekend included Trooping the Colour, Beacon Lighting, a Service of Thanksgiving, a Party at the Palace and a Pageant topping off the celebrations on Sunday.

With four days of festivities for the nation to enjoy, leading trade bodies UKHospitality, the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII), Hospitality Ulster, and the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) expect the hospitality industry to have enjoyed a bumper weekend of takings, with predictions of a 22% increase in trade over the four-day celebrations.

In a joint statement, the four trade organisations outlined, *'At last, our beleaguered sector is able to look forward to the sort of trading period that will give it a massive boost as it sets out on the long road to post-pandemic recovery. There are still lots of hurdles that businesses have to clear on the way back to profitability – huge cost increases, a staffing crisis, rising COVID rent repayments and too much red tape – but these four days will do wonders for income and for employee morale. It's also a wonderful, celebratory moment for millions of people who've been denied the opportunity to socialise with friends and*

family for far too long, and we sense there's a real pent-up desire among the population to get out and enjoy itself.'

With the Jubilee weekend expected to provide a massive boost to UK retail and hospitality businesses, revellers are expected to have spent in excess of £2bn on food and drink supplies, while pubs, bars and restaurants are hoping for £3bn in sales, £400m more than during a normal Thursday to Sunday in May. UK retail footfall was forecast to rise 8% over the weekend, with a 10% jump on high streets.

PM wins vote of no confidence

On Monday night, Conservative MPs voted by 211 to 148 to retain Boris Johnson as Prime Minister and party leader. The result means the PM cannot be challenged from within the Conservative ranks for one full year. The vote was called after 54 Conservative MPs submitted letters to the 1922 Committee demanding that Boris Johnson's leadership be contested.

Help to Buy application deadline brought forward

Homes England have revealed that the government's Help to Buy scheme is winding down two months earlier than initially planned. The deadline has been updated on the government's website, *'The Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme will close to new applications at 6pm on 31 October 2022,'* brought forward from 31 December 2022.

Recent data published by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities showed that 8,913 properties were purchased with an equity loan under the scheme in Q4 2021, down 41% on Q4 2019, prior to the pandemic.

"Blockbuster" jobs data across the pond

The latest data from the US Labor Department showed that US employers added more new jobs than expected in May, with payrolls rising by 390,000, exceeding forecasts of a 325,000 rise. Although the increase was the slowest for a year, the unemployment rate held at 3.6% for the third consecutive month. The annual rate of inflation in the US was 8.3% in the year to April, a small drop from 8.5% recorded for March which was the highest rate since 1981. On Friday, US President Joe Biden said that the economy was moving to a *"new period of stable, steady growth."* He continued, *"We aren't likely to see the kind of blockbuster job reports month after month like we had over this past year, but that's a good thing. That's a sign of a healthy economy with steady growth, rising wages for working families, everyday costs easing up, and shrinking the deficit. That stability puts us in a strong position to tackle what is clearly a problem: inflation."*

Here to help

Financial advice is key, so please do not hesitate to get in contact with any questions or concerns you may have.

***The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested.
The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated.
All details are correct at time of writing (8 June 2022)***